IDEA 2004 and NCLB

Florida has had a process in place to provide accessible materials to students with visual impairments, including those with dual sensory impairment (deaf-blindness) for the past 35 years. The NIMAS/Florida Implementation Plan establishes procedures for providing accessible instructional materials to an expanded population of students with print disabilities beyond those with visual impairments. As NIMAS is an IDEA initiative, **only** students who are currently being served in exceptional student education (ESE) programs who meet specific eligibility criteria can use NIMAS-sourced materials. The purpose of this plan is to address the needs of this expanded population. Students with Section 504 plans and students in ESE programs who do not meet NIMAS eligibility **may not** use NIMAS-sourced materials.

**National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard' (NIMAS)** refers to the standard established by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education to be used in the preparation of electronic files suitable and used solely for efficient conversion into specialized formats.

The **National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC)** receives source files in NIMAS format from textbook publishers and makes these files available for download to the Florida.

**Authorized user:** An authorized user is an agent of the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) with access to the NIMAC database and may download NIMAS-conformant files in accordance with established agreements. The single authorized user for Florida is the Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired (FIMC-VI).

**Authorized entity:** A nonprofit organization or a governmental agency that has a primary mission to provide specialized services relating to training, education, or adaptive reading or information access needs of blind or other persons with disabilities.

**Accessible Media Producer (AMP):** Companies that can use their converter technology to convert a NIMAS file into various specialized formats that can serve students with reading disabilities depending on their particular needs.

Who is eligible

* **Blind:** persons whose visual acuity, as determined by competent authority, is 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting lenses, or whose widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees.
* **Visual Impairment:** persons whose visual disability, with correction and regardless of optical measurement, is certified by competent authority as preventing the reading of standard printed material.
* **Physical Limitations:** persons certified by competent authority as unable to read or unable to use standard printed material as a result of physical limitations.
* **Print Disabilities:** persons certified by competent authority as having a [reading disability](http://www.loc.gov/nls/reference/factsheets/readingdisabilities.html) resulting from organic dysfunction and of sufficient severity to prevent their reading printed material in a normal manner.

### Competent Authority: In cases of *blindness*, *visual impairment*, or *physical limitations*, competent authority is defined to include doctors of medicine; doctors of osteopathy; ophthalmologists; optometrists; registered nurses; therapists; and professional staff of hospitals, institutions, and public or private welfare agencies (e.g., social workers, case workers, counselors, rehabilitation teachers, and superintendents).

### In the case of [reading disability](http://www.loc.gov/nls/reference/factsheets/readingdisabilities.html)from organic dysfunction, competent authority is defined as doctors of medicine and doctors of osteopathy who may consult with colleagues in associated disciplines.

**Statewide NIMAS Accomplishments/Responsibilities**

* **Florida Department of Education (FDOE)**
* Adopted NIMAS and coordinate with the NIMAC in order to facilitate the development of a production and delivery infrastructure that is cost effective, efficient, and appropriate to the needs of students with print disabilities in Florida.
* Assigned the NIMAS primary contact to coordinate statewide activities. (Dawn Saunders/ Program Specialist/Visually Impaired; [Dawn.Saunders@fldoe.org](mailto:Dawn.Saunders@fldoe.org))
* Required publishers to prepare and, on or before delivery of the print instructional materials, provide to the NIMAC electronic files containing the contents of the print instructional materials using the NIMAS.
* Established a **State NIMAS Stakeholders Committee** (members include DOE/BEESS representatives such as Bureau Chief, Section Administrator(s), State NIMAS Coordinator; NIMAC Authorized User; DOE Instructional Materials’ staff; district representative; teacher representative; parent(s) of students with disabilities; textbook publishers; Florida School Book Depository staff; etc.).
* Established direction for State Education Agency (DOE/BEESS) that specifically addresses improved communication among those with shared responsibility for successful implementation of NIMAS
* Supported appointment of FIMC-VI as the NIMAS Authorized User (Suzanne A. Dalton, Supervisor; [sdalton@fimcvi.org](mailto:sdalton@fimcvi.org))
* Reviewed and approved the NIMAS Implementation Plan with objectives, responsible entities, timelines, organizational chart\* and flow chart\*.
* Responsible for ensuring on-going effectiveness of the NIMAS Implementation Plan
* Developed a NIMAS/Florida Implementation Plan with objectives, responsible entities, timelines, organizational chart\* and flow chart\*.

\*copy attached

* Assigned FIMC-VI as the authorized user.

***New* FIMC-VI Responsibilities**

* Provision of accessible materials to eligible students
* Development of the NIMAS database
* Oversight of the NIMAS database
* Compilation of reports from the database
* Coordination with AMPs
* Management of information rights of files (encrypting, watermarking, fingerprinting, expiration dates)

**Ongoing FIMC-VI Responsibilities**

* Provision of accessible materials to students with visual impairments and students with deaf-blindness through *existing* FIMC-VI database
* Aligned existing statewide professional development activities and assigned to coordinate with all applicable state-funded projects
* **Five FDLRS Regional Technology Specialists (FDLRS RTS)** – for contact list, see: <http://www.paec.org/fdlrsweb/techContacts.pdf>
* Providing systematic implementation of NIMAS training statewide via traditional and eLearning methods (pod casts, webinars, virtual workshops and face-to-face) to Local Assistive Technology Specialists (LATS) and ESE stakeholders. Topics may include, but not be limited to:
* Considering the need for accessible materials in the instructional setting for students with print disabilities
  + - Providing information on accessible digital literacy tools/features available for use by students with disabilities (SWD)
    - Evaluating instructional materials formats to identify which format is needed by the student (Braille, large print, audio or e-text)
    - Using assessment protocols, which include a “feature match” that aides in the selection of accessible digital literacy tools necessary for students access to the curriculum
    - Assisting AT Teams in interpretation of assessment trials and identification of corresponding equipment/services: assistive technology, support services and training
* Providing information regarding the IEP Team’s responsibilities when determiningif the student needs instructional materials in alternate formatsby reviewing evaluation information and present level of performance to determine ifthe student has disability-related difficulty with tasks
* Providing information regarding criteria for determining whether students can be certified as “print disabled”
  + - Writing IEP goals including accommodations or modifications necessary for the provision of digital learning and digital instructional materials
    - Documenting continuous student progress using various formats
* Providing systematic implementation of NIMAS training statewide via traditional and eLearning (pod casts, webinars, virtual workshops and face-to-face) to **FDLRS Local Technology Specialists** **(FDLRS LTS).** Topics may include, but not be limited to:
* Connecting assistive technology, universal design for learning and accessible materials in the instructional setting
* Addressing IEP team responsibilities
* Reviewing student’s evaluation information
* Assisting with determining the student’s present levels of achievement (as needed)
* Determining whether a student has been certified as having a print disability under the Chafee Amendment
* Addressing student needs if not eligible according to Chafee Amendment
* Examining alternative formats
* Identifying instruction, supports, services and/or training will be needed by the students others to use the materials effectively
* Taking steps to obtain and/or prepare alternate formats
* Identifying training topics to address with *District* Digital Rights Managers (*District* DRMs), *School* Digital Rights Managers (*School* DRMs) and/or IEP Teams
* Assisting with NIMAS awareness efforts and development of materials to increase consumer understanding and use of accessible digital materials.
* **Nineteen FDLRS Local Technology Specialists (FDLRS LTS)** – for contact list, see: <http://www.paec.org/fdlrsweb/techContacts.pdf>
* Supporting the NIMAS trainings provided by the FDLRS RTS via traditional and eLearning (pod casts, webinars, virtual workshops and face-to-face) at district and school level on topics such as
* NIMAS/NIMAC definitions
* Team-building skills and decision-making at the district and school level
* IEP team responsibilities
* NIMAS awareness efforts for families and community organizations
* Assisting districts in building local capacity to provide accessible materials for students not eligible to access NIMAS XML files

**District NIMAS Responsibilities --** Continuing provision of accessible materials for students who are visually impaired

* Using the existing web-based student registration and materials ordering database system based at FIMC-VI, provide accessible instructional materials to students with ***visual Impairments*** and students with ***deaf-blindness*** through [www.fimcvi.org](http://www.fimcvi.org).
* District administrators of Exceptional Student Education annually appoint the authorized users of the FIMC-VI database.
* FIMC-VI Authorized Users for each district (often teachers of the visually impaired) will register students and order instructional materials through the existing web-based FIMC-VI database system.
* On behalf of eligible students, FIMC-VI will request NIMAS XML files from NIMAC, assign to an AMP for conversion, develop needed graphics, and deliver materials to district/school.

**Getting Started *-* District NIMAS Responsibilities**

* Using a statewide web-based NIMAS student registration and materials ordering database system, provide accessible instructional materials to ***students with physical impairments*** and ***students with*** ***print disabilities due to an organic dysfunction*** through [www.fimcvi.org](http://www.fimcvi.org).
* District administrators of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) will appoint, at least one **but not** **more than seven**, District NIMAS Digital Rights Manager(s). It is anticipated that many administrators will appoint district-based staff members from their ESE Department to serve this role.
* District DRM(s) will register students and order instructional materials through the web-based NIMAC database system.
* On behalf of eligible students, FIMC-VI will, in turn, request a NIMAS XML file from NIMAC, assign to an AMP who will convert the file into the requested format and deliver the electronic file directly to the school.
* Establish a ***District* NIMAS Accessible Materials Committee.** This committee could include, but is not limited to: district instructional materials staff; district ESE staff such as ESE District Administrators/Coordinators/Supervisors, District NIMAS DRM(s), ESE Area Supervisors, Local Assistive Technology Specialists, FDLRS Local Technology Specialists; district networking instructional technology staff; and parents of students with disabilities.
* Develop a district implementation plan with goals, objectives and timelines, and process for identification of school-level DRMs (sample plan form attached).
* Continue to provide accessible materials to students with visual impairments and students with deaf-blindness.

**Getting Started – School-Level NIMAS Responsibilities**

* Provide accessible instructional materials to ***students with visual and*** ***physical impairments*** and ***students with*** ***print disabilities due to an organic dysfunction.***
* Establish a ***School* NIMAS Accessible Materials Committee.** Representatives could include, but are not limited to: school-based staff such as ESE specialist, ESE department head, ESE teachers, ESE leads, case manager, guidance counselor, instructional materials contact, district assistive and instructional technology staff, therapists, reading coaches and parents of students with disabilities.
* Develop a school implementation plan with goals, objectives and timelines
* Appoint a school-based NIMAS DRM who will submit student registration information and orders for instructional materials to the District NIMAS DRM. Instructional materials that may be ordered are found in the Catalog of State Adopted Instructional Materials which is updated annually in April.
* Provide professional development and technical assistance to IEP teams regarding the eligibility criteria for students to receive materials through NIMAC, assessment alternatives, etc
* As a component of the NIMAS implementation process, the district will continue to provide accessible materials to students with visual impairments and students with deaf-blindness.

Resources

CAST, Inc.; 40 Harvard Mills Square, Suite 3; Wakefield, MA 01880-3233

Voice (781) 245-2212; TTY (781) 245-9320; Fax (781) 245-5212; [**nimas@cast.org**](mailto:nimas@cast.org)

From **“Accessible Textbooks in the Classroom II”**

Once state and local education agencies agree to coordinate with the NIMAC (all 50 states have indicated willingness to do so) they are then obligated to require publishers to deposit NIMAS filesets of print materials to the NIMAC or to purchase specialized-format versions (Braille, audio, digital text, and large print) directly from publishers.

Defines

**Market model** - The number of curriculum publishers offering accessible versions of their print materials continues to be limited, but is steadily increasing. All stakeholders interested in the alternate-format initiative, including publishers, disability advocates, the United States Department of Education, assistive technology vendors, and educators believe that, ultimately, the market model for accessible alternate-format materials is the best solution.

**Digital text**

**Specialized format**

**Categories of digital text**

**What can be done with digital text**

**Accessible Media in the IEP – What this means for IEP Teams**